The Builder.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1852.

PARLIAMENT has voted 150,000*l.* as the first step on the part of the Legislature in furtherance of the proposal made by the Royal Commissioners of 1851, to provide "one large Institution devoted to the purposes of instruction, adequate for the extended wants of industry, and in connection with similar institutions in the provinces." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in bringing forward a motion for the grant on the 6th inst. urged that the time was come when it was necessary that a great effort should be made, by which an industrial education should be given in this country, and the influences of science and art upon productions be more systematically brought to bear. That our various institutions were scattered about, and not working in connection with one another; that the British Museum could not afford sufficient accommodation for its purposes; that the Schools of the Royal Academy were closed at the time most favourable for the students, because of the annual exhibition of modern art; that our pictures were stowed away in different buildings, instead of being brought together under one roof and made to form a complete school of art; and further, that the various learned societies of the metropolis all wanted space and accommodation. He looked ultimately to find the learning, the science, and the art of the country collected together in one place, and illuminating with their accumulated radiance not only the metropolis, but every part of the kingdom.

Lord Seymour thought the societies would object to being removed to Kensington.—— Lord John Russell, as one of the commissioners, supported the proposal, and said Lord Seymour was possibly right with regard to many of these associations, but the commissioners left the matter quite optional with the societies themselves. Any one who was acquainted with the Treasury knew that frequent applications were made by some of these scientific societies for the use of public buildings in which to hold their meetings; and it had been stated, on behalf of some of them, that they found house-rents so very expensive that they would be obliged to dissolve the societies if their applications were refused. It must be evident that, in such cases, the societies would be very glad to have rooms allotted to them in the proposed buildings, where their meetings might take place.

Mr. H. Drummond made an extraordinary speech: we have never done anything good in the arts and never will.

"To try to make the people of this country like the highest order of painting was just as absurd as to try to make the Italians like beefsteaks and porter. We never did excel in the highest departments of manufactures even. At no time had we even attained the degree of perfection in the working of iron which had been reached abroad. Up to this moment we were unable to keep up the supply of patterns for ordinary articles of dress; we were obliged to go to France for them. Not one of our greatest painters ever knew how to draw. Reynolds never did; Lawrence never did. It was, he believed, impossible to find any man in this country to do that which was of everyday occurrence in Italy,—namely, to make an outline drawing of a great picture. Let those who talked about 'high art' go into the lobby and look at the fresco painting, and, if they did not feel ashamed, why, all he could say was, that they ought to do so. It was now proposed that a great national building should be erected on the ground about to be purchased; but where were we to find an architect? The original estimate for the new Houses of Parliament was 700,000*l.* They had already cost 2,500,000*l.* and the room in which the House now sat—the room *par excellence*—the building in which the great business of the country was conducted, was not sufficiently large to hold the members. Until lately it was impossible for members to hear each other in it, and now they were frozen out by cold."

All that we have recently done in the comparatively brief space of time during which endeavours have been really made to advance the arts in this country goes for nothing with the honourable member, and he reverts to what we thought was an exploded libel.

The mover, in reply to this, said that no attempt would be made to force a feeling for art upon the people of this country. The establishment of a National Gallery formed only a subordinate part of the scheme. The object chiefly desired was to give an industrial education to the people, and to bring the influence of science and art to bear on our manufacturing productions. No attempt would be made to infuse a *dilettante* spirit into the working classes, but an opportunity would be given them of fitting themselves for competing with their rivals throughout the world. Should the House determine to erect buildings on the site about to be purchased, the whole plan would be under their control, and care would be taken to INSURE THE COMPETITION OF ALL THE ARCHITECTURAL TALENT IN THE COUNTRY.

This last part of the statement will be received with gratification by the members of the profession throughout the kingdom.

Comments were made on the price paid for some of the land, and it was stated that a demand of 70,000*l.* had been sent in for four acres, but that it had been treated with the contempt it deserved.

Looking back to the Commissioners' report, mentioned last week, we find some particulars under this head which will interest our readers. The Gore House estate (Kensington-gore) obtained through "the disinterested instrumentality of Mr. Kelk, the builder," contains about 21½ acres, with a frontage, facing Hyde-park, of between 500 and 600 feet, and cost 60,000*l.* The Villars estate adjoining (negotiated for gratuitously on behalf of the Commissioners by Mr. Thomas Cubitt), contains 48 acres, and was bought, as we said at the time, for 153,500*l.*

We may mention, as illustrating the subject, that we have just now negotiated the sale of a plot of land in Brompton adjoining the church, under 3½ acres in extent, for which we received 16,000*l.* nor would we have consented to our principal's accepting any less sum. To show the degree in which the value of land near London has increased, we may mention what we are told is the fact, that less than twenty years ago the whole of the land on which Brompton-square stands, close to the last-mentioned plot, and *double in quantity*, was offered for sale at 3,000*l.* The increase in the value of land in the City is even more startling: for example, an offer of 16 guineas per annum per foot frontage has been made (not yet accepted) for land about 24 feet deep in Finch-lane and Threadneedle-street, belonging to St. Thomas's Hospital.

The Royal Commissioners state, amongst their reasons for buying so large a plot, and advising the purchase of even more, that the space provided for the British Museum being inadequate, a sum of not less than 67,500*l.* would be required to purchase a few neighbouring houses, which it would be necessary to demolish in order to obtain the necessary area.

"A similar history attaches to the various metropolitan improvements, which are rarely undertaken until the great lines of communication (which ought to have been originally provided for, but the necessity for which becomes only fully apparent with the growth of the town) have been already covered with houses and buildings. The expense at which these improvements have then to be carried out is of course enormous.

As an instance of the cost of making improvements in the metropolis, it may be mentioned that the outlay on some of the more important improvements undertaken of late years have been as follows:—

Line of Street.	Area of Property purchased	Total Cost.	Average Cost per Acre.
	Square feet	£	£.
Oxford-street to Holborn .	220,151	281,000	57,300
Bow-street to Charlotte-street	61,953	96,000	67,827
Coventry-street to Long-acre .	65,470	180,000	119,871

It is also within our cognizance that no less than 25,000*l.* per acre were paid for ten acres of the site occupied by one of the chief railway termini in London.

"In such towns as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, the price of sites for public buildings, streets, railway stations, &c. is frequently most excessive. In Manchester, from 10*l.* to 12*l.* per square yard (being at the rate of from 50,000*l.* to 60,000*l.* per acre), is a common price for the land on which the warehouse property is built, and as much as 40*l.* per square yard (or at the rate of nearly 200,000*l.* per acre), have been paid for land in the centre of the town. In Birmingham, again, some surplus land in the centre of the town belonging to the London and North-Western Railway Company, has, within the last few weeks, been sold at the average price of 11*l.* 16*s.* per yard, or at the rate of more than 57,000*l.* per acre; while a portion fetched 13*l.* 10*s.* per yard, or upwards of 65,000*l.* per acre.

In the same manner, land at Liverpool, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Town Hall and Exchange buildings, sells for 30*l.* per square yard, or at the rate of nearly 150,000*l.* per acre; and in extreme cases, 40*l.* per square yard, or nearly 200,000*l.* per acre, have been given. At a distance of 300 yards from the above, and off the great thoroughfares, land has sold for 20*l.* per square yard, or nearly 100,000*l.* per acre; while, even at the distance of more than a mile from that central point, and in a direction quite away from business, land has been bought for building purposes, in quantities exceeding an acre, at from 35*s.* to 39*s.* per square yard, or at the rate of from 8,470*l.* to 9,196*l.* per acre."

Architecture, it would seem, is not to be overlooked in the new Institution. The report says:—

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